


U.S. AIR FORCE

Support Group CC's Role: Knowing Fire Protection Troops

- **One of the most hazardous occupations in US**
- **DoD firefighters average over 200,000 responses per year**
- **Increased hazards:**
 - Aircraft composites, munitions, & ejection systems
 - Unique hazardous materials
 - Confined space rescue
- **DoD firefighter certification**
- **Current fire protection issues**
 - Organizational staffing
 - Duty schedules
 - Quality of life



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Integrity - Service - Excellence
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OSHA has defined fire fighting as one of the most hazardous occupation in the US. Fire fighting routinely exposes military firefighters to hostile & unpredictable environments, especially with the advent of advanced technologies involving dangerous chemicals & composite aircraft materials. Firefighters are required to operate in Immediately Dangerous to Life & Health (IDLH) atmospheres.

During FY95-FY00 DoD firefighters responded to 1,227,668 (USAF 484,676) emergency incidents averaging 204,611 (USAF 80,779) responses per year. Although protected by state-of-the-art equipment (breathing apparatus & protective clothing), fire fighting is inherently dangerous. DoD firefighters experienced 528 injuries & 4 firefighter fatalities (3 Air Force firefighter deaths) during this period. The firefighters are potentially exposed to dangerous conditions on every response.

Additionally DoD firefighters are faced with increased hazards when operating at accidents involving military assets. Aircraft laden with forward firing munitions, rockets, bombs, hydrazine, ejection systems, advanced aerospace materials, radiation emitting devices, & confined spaces present extremely dangerous conditions.

The DoD firefighter certification system provides a world class training & education process to prepare firefighters for the unique challenges of fire fighting. This nationally accredited training meets the qualification standards of the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA). The Air Force serves as the executive agent for development & implementation of DoD certification.

There are several current fire protection issues that are affecting our firefighters. The organizational staffing of fire response vehicles for 24/7 (24 hours a day, 7 days a week), creates a unique (72-hour work week) schedule for our firefighters. Minimum manning standards & contingency deployments impact the ability to staff fire protection vehicles. Fire station quality of life issues are extremely important. There is an ongoing Firefighter Morale, Discipline, & Retention IPT exploring options to improve the quality of life for our firefighters.